

The Meaning of Judgment

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Part IV

"The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX) (cont.)

(4:1) There can be no salvation in the dream as you are dreaming it.

This is the story of the world. It explains why every attempt to bring peace has been futile and has failed. We are always trying to achieve peace within the framework of the world. We are always trying to make everything better here, when nothing can be better here. That is because, first, this is a world of hate; and, second, there is no world here anyway. What has to be made better is our decision. We chose the ego, which was a mistake; the undoing of that mistake is to choose Jesus or the Holy Spirit. But there is nothing here that can be made better. Once we try to make the world better, we are falling into the ego's trap. Why would we want to make the world better unless we first believed there was something wrong with the world? And if we believe there is something wrong with the world, then quite obviously we believe there is a world here, which is exactly what the ego wants us to believe. We need to believe there is a world here, because that is our defense against the world we have made real within ourselves, of which we are terrified.

(4:2) For idols must be part of it, to save you from what you believe you have accomplished, and have done to make you sinful and put out the light within you.

What we believe we have accomplished is the murder of God, and now God is going to murder us in return. We all believe we have stolen the light of Heaven, which means we have destroyed that light. The light that we then believe is reality—the sun and the stars—is really artificial. We think there is a difference between the light from the sun and the light from a bulb—one is called natural and the other artificial or unnatural. It is *a//unnatural*. Some people think there is a difference between natural foods and processed, unnatural foods with chemical and other artificial additives. *A//foods* are unnatural because everything in this world is unnatural. There is no distinction among levels of illusion. As the first law of chaos states, there is a hierarchy of illusions (T-23.II.1). We all believe that we have extinguished the light.

At this point the section begins to shift its focus. Jesus is going to tell us how to deal with this dream. It is obvious that this dream of judgment is so enormous that it seems impossible ever to get past it. And we are not asked to get past it by our own doing—and certainly not by our ego's doing. All that we are asked to do, which is inherent in the second step of judgment, is to look at the dream and see it as it is. We are not asked to deny what we experience in this world, whether physical, emotional, or psychological. We are only asked to begin the process of denying that what we experience has any power over the Love and the peace of God within us. *That* we can begin to do something about.

We do not have to experience peace, but we at least have to realize *why* we are not experiencing peace. If I am not peaceful, it is not because of something you said or failed to say to me, or what you have done or have not done. If I am feeling weak and not well, it is not because something is wrong with my body. It is always because something is wrong with my mind: I have chosen the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. That is *why*, over and over again, Jesus says how very simple his course is. It is simple because everything is either true or false, and there is never any in between. There is no cause for anything in this world except my decision to have it be real. If I am happy, it is because I have chosen to be happy. If I am sad, it is because I have chosen to be sad. How I feel has nothing to do with externals.

The beginning of the undoing of the ego's thought system of judgment is our recognizing what it is: a thought system of judgment that is making us either upset or happy. It has nothing to do with anything outside; it is a thought system we have chosen. In other words, nothing has happened. The problem is not the dream of judgment. The problem is that we *believe* in the dream of judgment. There is no dream of judgment. There is no sin against God. God does not even know anything has happened, because nothing has happened. If there is no sin against God, there is no guilt. Guilt comes only from sin. And there can be no fear, because fear comes from guilt. There will be no sin in my mind that I have to deny or defend against. And if I do not have to deny it or defend against it, I do not need a world, because the only value the world serves is as a hiding place in which my guilt is protected.

Jesus then says:

(4:3-5) Little child, the light is there. You do but dream, and idols are the toys you dream you play with. Who has need of toys but children?

This is only one place among many (e.g., T-11.VIII.7:1; T-12.II.4:6) where Jesus addresses us as little children. He does not think very much of our maturity; and he describes the entire world of hatred, viciousness, murder, and specialness as a game that little children play (e.g., W-pl.153.7-8). That certainly puts everything in a totally different context. We think our problems and the problems of our loved ones and the problems of the world at large are all very serious. And indeed they are very serious within the dream.

But when we place the dream against the reality, we realize how trivial everything is. It is not trivial within the dream—just as in a nightmare at night what is going on in our minds does not seem trivial. Only when we awaken do we realize that we made it all up. It is trivial only when we look at it from the perspective of the Love of God. So my anxiety and disquiet, my fear, terror, and guilt come from not looking at the dream in the context of the Love of God, and not from anything I think is going on in my life.

The entire purpose of the Course is to help us understand this. If I am upset, it is not because of what you are doing to me. I feel guilty because, once again, I have dropped the hand of Jesus or the Holy Spirit and I feel alone. And in my solitude I feel terrified that the wrath of God will descend upon me and punish me because of what I have done. That is why I am upset. It has nothing to do with anything you or anyone else in the world says or anything else that goes on. It is a mistake to confuse the Course with other spiritual systems that teach that the Holy Spirit intervenes in the world. If He did, He would be falling for the same ego trick we fell for. The Holy Spirit or Jesus remain within our minds as a beacon of light that simply shines out its love, reminding us that we could choose that love instead of the ego's darkness.

All the peace, comfort, and joy that we want is found in that love. Everything else we are doing is like a game little children play. When children play games—"make believe" as we sometimes refer to it—what they are doing is not real. It may seem real to them at the moment, but the adult looking in on them realizes it is not real. Jesus is the adult looking in on our little playpen and all the little soldiers we are playing with. One group is killing off another group, literally or symbolically. We think it is serious, but Jesus is telling us it is not. That is why he calls us little children. Like little children, we do not understand the difference between appearance and reality. We all fall into the trap of thinking that what we do and say, where we live, what goes on in the world, and so on, are all very important. We are little children who see the world only through the myopic lens of our own very limited perception.

So, again:

(4:5-7) Who has need of toys but children? They pretend they rule the world, and give their toys the power to move about, and talk and think and feel and speak for them. Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them.

One type of psychotherapy with children is play therapy, where the child is given dolls and other figures to act out what is within his mind that he cannot verbalize. The child gives reality to the figures, projecting onto them unresolved issues with parents, siblings, and himself. And what the child is doing has nothing to do with the figures themselves. He is having the figures act out the thoughts within his own mind. Well, that is exactly what this whole world is. And we take seriously what seems to happen in the world we believe is out there, so that we do not have to get in touch with the world of judgment inside us.

So an essential part of the process of *A Course in Miracles* is to develop a relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. If neither of those names works for you, substitute any other symbol that reflects for you a loving, ego-free presence that is not of you but yet is within you. A personal relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit allows you to begin to separate yourself out from the self and the world that seems to be outside that self. That process enables us to look at what is going on and realize this is only a game that children play. It seems very real and very powerful within the game, but that does not mean it stops being simply a game that children play.

And again:

(4:7-8) Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them. But they are eager to forget that they made up the dream in which their toys are real, nor recognize their wishes are their own.

Children get very involved and identified with their make-believe games, forgetting that it is all made up. But that is exactly what we all do. We act just like little children. It is laughable that we think we are adults. Physically, we may be, but we are certainly not adults from a spiritual standpoint. We make up all of this, and then forget that we made it up. If we find ourselves getting upset because of a news story, or something in our personal worlds, as students of this course we certainly do not want to fight or deny what we are feeling. We should just step back and look with Jesus or the Holy Spirit, and observe ourselves getting upset by something that we believe is outside ourselves.

Now again, we are not speaking simply about observing what our eyes behold. We are talking about observing our *reaction* to it—our *interpretation* of what our eyes behold—and realizing that what we are seeing outside and believe is real and having an effect on us is nothing more than a projection of a thought we do not want to look at in ourselves. That is all we have to do. We do not have to fight against the thought or try to change it. We simply have to look at it. But we have to look at it with honesty. And the honesty says that if I am feeling something—if I am angry, upset, fearful, guilty or in pain—it is not because of something outside my mind. It is because of a decision my mind has made to see myself, once again, as separate from the Love of God. And what I am feeling is the effect of that decision: the guilt, the fear, the suffering and the pain, which automatically come from believing that I have sinned. That is all I have to do. I must only realize that this is not what I thought it was.